

**Present:** Matthew Adams (Chair), James Adnett, Paul Cumming, Phil Douce, Sam Lifford and Ed Senior.

**In Attendance:** Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal), Andrew Leyland (MAT/College Accountant), Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body).

**1. Apologies:** Tom Gregory

**2. Standing Items**

- (i) There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda.
- (ii) Those items referring to individual members of staff were identified as confidential.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

**3. Minutes**

(i) Minutes of the Finance & Resources committee: 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023

The minutes of the meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record. An update was provided in relation to the action points and the following was noted:

- The Vice Principal is working with the colleges in the Trust in relation to questions for next year's staff satisfaction survey which will allow benchmarking to take place;
- Whilst the penetration testing report has not been shared with Governors, Tom Gregory recently conducted a link visit meeting with the Senior Leader for ILT Strategy and the IT Manager to review the resilience of the College systems and will report back to the Local Governing Body.

**4. Finance**

(i) Finance Report

The MAT/College Accountant presented his report and made the following points:

- There would be an underspend of the ESFA grant funding of £36,000. To date the science centre project had cost £1,664,000 with a £424,000 condition payment from the ESFA on completion;
- The forecast to the end of April in terms of staff costs indicated a positive variance of £49,000;
- The EBITDA forecast is £334,000 which includes £70,000 for work to refurbish existing science labs and £50,000 for Wi-Fi assets resulting in an accounting surplus of £284,000;
- The College had a cumulative surplus of £615,000 although there is £485,000 of the existing loan to be repaid to the Trust. It was likely that the repayment of the monies towards the science centre project would be taken from distributable reserves.

In response to challenge the following points were raised:

- The Committee were unsure why, as a single entity, interest would be applied to an internal loan and raised a concern that the arrangements for this had not yet been confirmed with the project nearing completion. They requested that the Principal seek clarity on this matter and report back.
- The £38,000 variation in admin and finance staffing was not something to be concerned about for next year. The Principal explained that decisions in relation to levels of support staff can be taken quite late and can depend on teaching staff appointments and what is left in the staffing budget. Variations can also be the result of contract changes e.g. the DSL is on a support staff contract whereas his predecessor was on a teaching contract;

- Decisions not to replace staff in-year did have a significant impact on colleagues, but in some cases e.g. due to employment processes being followed, it was not always possible to make in-year appointments.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

## 5. Update Reports

### (i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his update report and noted the following points:

- Applications are currently 120 ahead of the equivalent point last year. The best predication based on a modest increase in year 1 numbers and similar increase in year 2 rollover, the College might have up to 100 more students next year;
- Capacity remains a significant challenge. Whilst completion of the Science Centre in mid-September will mitigate this in terms of available teaching spaces, there will be continued pressure on common spaces including the Cafeteria and LRC;
- The reduction in funding for student financial support was such that the daily allowance for free meals will be reduced from £7.50 this year to £6 next academic year. Following challenge from the Curriculum and Quality Committee, it has since been clarified that £6 could get a student a breakfast baguette, a hot meal (e.g. chicken and chips), a drink and a chocolate bar for example;
- Although the funding for Core Maths has been restored for 2023-24, delivery would be reduced from 3 to 2 lessons per week, the reasons for which are two-fold. It is difficult to make the teaching staff appointment that would be needed with no certainty as to whether Core Maths will continue to be delivered in 2024-25 and as a response to capacity issues;
- No end is in sight to the NEU teachers' strike action with 7 days of disruption this academic year with the NEU mandated for further action between now and November. The NASUWT are also balloting their members;
- The Science Centre project is on track and on budget. The College has been notified this week that the CIF bid for fire safety work was unsuccessful – the College received a score of 65 and the threshold for success was 72.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- The best estimate was that the student number would 1800 next year which would further increase the pressures on social and study spaces. When the College last had student numbers above 1600, student feedback became less positive in response to questions around being able to find a computer or overcrowding in communal areas. There have been recent discussions with NWHS about use of the sports facilities who think they can be more flexible which may still enable a change to the timetable next year to facilitate separate lunch times for year 1 and year 2 students;
- Attendance was improving, but is not where it needs to be and strategies around improving attendance will be shared with governors in due course;
- To mitigate the impact of the science centre not being ready until mid-September, spaces such as the Hall and Gym, although not ideal could be used for teaching and some delivery such as Independent Study could start late.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

### (ii) HR Update

The Principal presented the personnel update and noted the following:

- There has been a little more turnover than is typical although the College has been successful in its staff appointments. Challenges in appointing subject specialists have already impacted schools and the College was starting to potentially face similar challenges. Fewer applications were typically being received for vacancies with fewer candidates having degrees from Oxbridge or Russell Group universities;

- The position of MIS Manager has been readvertised on a higher range;
- A lot of support had been provided for ECTs, however, only one of the six appointed at the start of last academic year would be at College next year.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- Consideration would be given to feedback in exit interviews in terms of whether there are any themes in the reasons for staff leaving College;
- Given how hard staff had to work it was possible that their work life balance was not as it should be;
- Strike action had impacted on the College as even where teachers were in the classroom, if their students had other teachers they knew to be on strike, they had sometimes decided not to travel to College.

The Committee **noted** the update provided.

(iii) Estates Update

The updated Estates Strategy was shared and the following points noted:

- The Science Centre extension would provide 3 new labs and one classroom and allow existing older labs to be repurposed – work would begin on two of these in the coming weeks. This would not, however, help in addressing the shortage of social space;
- The contractors completing the Science project have been really professional and there had been no issues or concerns raised;
- Work to create a clinical skills room would need to be completed to facilitate delivery of the Health T Level;
- There was a water leak in the PE and Performing Arts corridor which was being investigated and could possibly result in expensive repair;
- Media will move to a new classroom to give them better facilities and increase the maximum class size above 20;
- Quotes were being obtained for additional fencing to extend the secure outdoor area.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

## 6. Governance

(i) Update

The Clerk presented her report and outlined the following points:

- A training needs survey will be shared with governors with a view to organising relevant training for next academic year;
- The Committee was invited to review its terms of reference and cycle of business;
- A draft schedule of meetings for 2022-23 was presented for recommendation;
- The Curriculum and Quality Committee recommended the approval of two external governors who, if appointed, will sit on the Finance and Resources Committee. One would be the designated safeguarding governor and the other the SEND link governor.

The Committee **recommended** for approval the terms of reference, cycle of business and proposed meeting dates.

## 7. Policy Reviews

(i) Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The Committee **approved** the policy without change and noted that the Trust was due to approve a Trust-wide policy on health and safety as the employer which would replace the local policy.

The Vice Principal provided an update on staff wellbeing. Following less positive feedback in the staff survey around communication, wellbeing and workload, alongside the Workload Forum, there had been the first meeting of a communication and wellbeing focus group with the aim of identifying specific things that would be done to promote wellbeing e.g. an employee appreciation initiative, staff walking group etc. The Committee **noted** the update provided.

(ii) Fees & Charging Policy

The Committee **approved** the proposed policy with the minor changes as outlined.

## 8. Annual Reports

(i) Safeguarding

The Committee considered the annual Safeguarding report and extended their thanks to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for such a comprehensive report. The Committee **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Staff Development

The Vice Principal made reference to the Staff Development report prepared by the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning and commented that colleagues were able to articulate teaching and learning strategies clearly as evidenced by Ofsted as a result of training.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and commented positively on how the impact of training had been included.

(iii) Learning Support

The Principal made reference to the report prepared by the Learning Support Manager. It was noted that the Learning Support department was well-led and students are well supported with identified learning needs including high needs students. It had proved challenging to appoint to learning support roles in recent years, but there had been more success this year. The Committee **noted** the contents of the report and extended their thanks to the Learning Support Manager for such a comprehensive report.

(iii) Disciplinary Report

The Vice Principal presented the report. It was noted, following the committee's request for information on how the number of disciplinary incidents compared to pre-pandemic years, the 56 incidents this year was higher than 2019-20 when there were 39 incidents. It was, however, noted that two incidents this year involved the same group of students.

In response to challenge about the reason for the higher number, it was noted that there have been more issues than is typical with low level behaviour in particular and this was perhaps the result of the disruption of the pandemic in the formative years of this cohort which impacted on opportunities to develop social skills.

The Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

## 9. Health & Safety

(i) Health & Safety Update and Accident Report

The Principal presented the report and noted that the accident statistics are reflective of pre-COVID numbers particularly in relation to accidents sustained whilst participating in sport. The Committee **noted** the information provided.

## 10. Closing Standing Items

- (i) Risk Management  
No additional risks were identified. It was noted that the updated risk register will be considered at the Local Governing Body meeting in June.
- (ii) Impact: The Committee noted its impact in terms of offering challenge about how the College would respond to capacity issues, the impact of any loan repayment to the Trust and the increase in the number of disciplinary matters.
- (iii) Any Urgent Business: None.
- (iv). Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (if the schedule of meetings is approved by the Local Governing Body).

The meeting finished at 6.40 p.m.

Signed:.....

Matthew Adams (Chair)

Date:.....

**FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
FRC/24.05.23/4(i)	Seek clarity about the arrangements for repaying the internal loan for the science centre and note governors concern should the proposal be for interest to be charged.	EYS	ASAP	
FRC/24.05.23/5(ii)	Consider whether there are any identifiable themes in exit interviews as to why staff decide to leave.	EYS	November 2023	

**ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>

**ACTION POINTS COMPLETED**

<b>Report Reference</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Check</b>
FRC/15.02.23/4(i)	Provide more information on the distributable reserves.	APL	May 2023	✓
FRC/15.02/23/5(ii)	Consider how to educate parents on the local Prevent risks, in particular, money laundering.	EYS	ASAP	✓
FRC/15.02.23/6(i)	Review job vacancy wording to encourage more applications from under-represented groups.	EYS	May 2023	✓
FRC/15.02/23/6(ii)	Review staff satisfaction questions to allow comparisons with other colleges in the Trust and also to disaggregate responses by teaching and support staff.	JLJ	May 2023	✓
FRC/15.02.23/(11i)	Link visit to be conducted in relation to IT resilience against cyber threats.	JJP	May 2023	✓

\* Denotes changes.